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THE ART REVIEW

DEVOTED TO ART, MUSIC, AND LITERATURE.

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A SUMMER PICTURE.

BY EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER.

FROM saffron to purple, from purple to gray,
Slow fades on the mountain the beautiful day:
I sit where the roses are heavy with bloom,
And wait for the moonlight to whiten the gloom.

Far down the green valley I see through the night,
The lamps of the village shine, steady and bright;
But on my sweet silence there creeps not a tone
Of labor or sorrow, of pleading or moan.

Low sings the glad river along its dark way,
An echo by night of its chiming by day,
And tremulous branches lean down to the tide
To dandle the waters that under them glide.

The night-moths are flitting about in the gloom,
Their wings from the blossoms shake dainty perfume;
I know where the cups of the lilies are fair
By the breath of their sweetness that floats on the air.

I sit in the shadow, but lo! in the west
The mountains in garments of glory are drest!
And slowly the sheen of their brightness drops down,
To rest on the hills in a luminous crown.

The dew glitters clear where the meadows are green,
In ranks of white splendor the lilies are seen,
And the roses above me sway lightly to greet
Their shadowy sisters, afloat at my feet.

Low sings the glad river, its waters a-light,
A pathway of silver, lead on through the night;
And fair as the glorified isles of the blest
Lies all the sweet valley, the valley of rest.

ART-PROGRESS IN AMERICA.

BY EUGENE BENSON.

WHENEVER any one awakens to the perception of the beautiful, art begins; when a society unites to express its need of the beautiful, art has found its public, and the divine idea is about to be incarnated. The general awakening of our society to a sense of its want of the beautiful—an awakening which has followed so closely its mighty struggle and grand self-sacrifice for the general good, is one of the most striking facts of our domestic experience. It almost seems as if each man was working with his neighbor to secure the beautiful; and all the

minor means of popularizing art, all the means of duplicating and scattering copies of the works of ancient and modern painters, bear witness to a generally felt need of the beautiful. This need, which but a few years ago was fairly met by the art of the engraver, now asks for something yet closer to our actual impressions of nature, and it has awakened the curiosity of the mind so much that ART is almost as general a subject of interest as politics and religion. This need of the beautiful, in its commonest form, now asks for an art that employs *color*. The American does not love a cold, or a sober expression, and I suppose it is for this reason that he has welcomed the chromo-lithograph, which pleases him more than the old art of steel engraving. It pleases him, because it is cheaper, and a closer approximation to the beauty of an oil painting, in fact, because it is a better *imitation*. An American may be unacquainted with the glories and wonders of art; he may know nothing of what constitutes the excellence of the old masters of painting, but he is familiar with a full scale of color in his autumn forests, and the chromo-lithograph at least gives him something nearer to the gold, and scarlet, and russet hues, and the varied tints of meadows, swamps and woods, than any other common means of duplicating his impressions of the beautiful. Twenty years ago our landscape painters were not much in advance of the steel engravers' idea of art. They employed neutral tints, and seemed not to know positive ones; the vivid green of the grass, the warm and brilliant hues of the fall were poorly rendered, in fact, oftener avoided in landscape art. We cite the landscapes of Durand in proof of our statement. To-day we are so far in advance of the engravers' idea of painting that we can point to a group of landscapists whose aim corresponds with the fulness and glory of the impression of nature.

The progress of art in America is wholly a matter of individual effort. No State aid has evoked or supported men of genius or of talent, but men of genius have simply grown up and drawn nourishment from

whatever could give it to them. The sentiment of art naturally has been strongest in the greatest centers of our social life; and in New York and Boston it seems to have made its most pronounced and precious expression. But there is no reason why cities of less wealth, and therefore less absorbed by the mere business of present gain, should not afford some encouragement to art. If the progress of art in America has extended beyond a few liberal and cultivated men in our greatest cities; if it has not been confined to New York, Boston and Chicago, the men and women of some means and much leisure in the minor cities of the Union must certainly be interested in giving some sign of existence of the "Art Idea" in their midst.

Public opinion, which requires a local newspaper to formulate its conclusions, and sow itself in every household, is yet to be educated to a perception of the use of the beautiful. A people who may be said to live in every possible form of human expression, will be as willing to tax themselves for the establishment of a picture gallery, and a hall of casts after famous statues, as they are willing to make a fund for a public library. The want of such local means of art education as we speak of has effected the whole culture of the American mind, and it makes the distinction between the American limited to his narrow-home experience, and the American who has been illuminated by the great and ancient ideals of art in foreign lands.

A copy of J. R. Ward's "Indian," of H. K. Brown's "Washington," of Palmer's "White Captive," a cast of the "Venus," of "Milo," of the "Gladiator," of the "Theseus," of the "Victory of the Parthenon," of the head of "Antinous," of "Nero," of "Cesar," of "Socrates," of "Demosthenes," in Portland, Augusta, Salem, Newburyport, Springfield, Burlington, Albany and Ithaca, would do much for the art culture of America. Who could estimate the influence of the presence of such works in the society of these cities? Religion and law, which have voice and honor in our towns, would be fairly supplemented in their conservative influence by

without which we cannot expect to form a complete man—the harmonious man, whose development corresponds with nature and the ideals of the past.

When the best men of our best cities raise for the purchase of the works of art, then we shall boast of the progress of art in the United States. Such a fund ought to be raised in the principal towns of this country, and it should be devoted to the patronage of American art as soon as these towns have secured casts in plaster of the leading examples of antique sculpture. If art had really progressed in our land to the extent we could wish it had, so that we might affirm that we as a people afford evidence that we love the beautiful, even more than the *pictorial*, which is the present stage of our common taste for art, every town would have a gallery of its ablest men, and of its most beautiful women. Honest and illustrious citizens and rarely beautiful women should have all the local immortality that art might secure for them. A town would, in this way, not only encourage art, but it would foster reverence, honor its best men and women, and illustrate its past. Such a public patronage of art would show a democratic society not less intelligent than an aristocratic society; it would show us a community educated to a point which now seems to be reached only by a few favored individuals, educated to appreciate and honor the best results of civilization, ability applied to the public good in great or useful men—beauty, the common property of all eyes, in the faces of beautiful women.

A town gallery might show us, in the course of several generations, a group of women who would contest the palm of beauty with the ladies of the famous courts of monarchial countries, and the municipality of an obscure city of an American State might boast of its beautiful women as we now boast of the beauties of the court of Charles II. But, as beautiful women, like men of ability, are very apt to be drawn to the greatest centers of life, we fear the galleries of Washington, New York, Boston and Chicago would soon claim the loveliness of the country districts just as these cities claim the best men of the country. But the point is just here; the town should possess itself of the portraits of such of its sons and daughters who have distinguished themselves in the world. The native town may have been too narrow a field for the great man, but it is not too small a place to take pride in having been his birth-place.

How far are we from such an understanding of the practical use of the artist in society? We are yet so far from it that the written proposition, the moment it includes a thing of beauty rather than a thing of social vanity, sounds strange to us. We are so far from the sentiment of the beautiful that even the public galleries of our largest cities do not illustrate anything but our wish to honor public men and illustrate history. The Greeks and Italians had the wish to do more, to honor the beautiful.

The Governor's rooms and the State Houses

of our capital cities can boast of a few portraits and a few battle pictures. But as yet we have not paid much public tribute to the beautiful. Yet what we fail to do in our public capacity we often do in our private life, and we have, in our homes portraits and landscapes, which in some cases ought to be in a public gallery. But real progress in art means that individual taste has become a general taste; that the private idea has become a public one; that all that has charmed or exalted the individual has been placed within the reach of a people. We are on the way to such a result, and New York and Boston are alike working to establish museums of art. Meantime, individual artists are working out the national or native American idea of art; they are expressing in marble or on canvas their personal idea or personal experience, and anything else from the studios of our artists is a sign of feebleness and retrogression—a sign of spurious art; that is, something we do not want. Progress in art is development of native germs, and general understanding and love of every form of the beautiful. We should be grateful for every bit of ancient and foreign art; in fact, we should seek to get examples of ancient and foreign art, for they are necessary as an aid in the cultivation of the historic sense. But we must not forget the vital truth that all precious art is the result of the actual experience of a people, and is not made, but merely refined in its expression, by museums of art and the teaching of foreign artists. All good art is personal; it is the ideal of a solitary observer of nature. The child or man who strolls into the woods and for the first time sees the beauty of a flower, has the sentiment of the beautiful revealed to him; his casual experience is a key to the constant life of the true artist. In our country, art, which is now an idea in a few minds, which has just won a few refined advocates and enlisted a host of lovers of the pictorial, is yet to become a general taste, a general pleasure, as it is in France, where it does so much for the pleasure of the eye and the elevation of common life. Think, for an instant, what a poor creature a Frenchman would be without his museums and art galleries. Can we expect to be much more with less means of social stimulus? And was it not the great Goethe who said that we should endeavor every day to see a beautiful picture, read a poem, and hear a little music, and so keep alive our sentiment of the ideal, so cultivate a love of the beautiful? and then he tells us that we *must* do this, for the useful will take care of itself.

“As with books, one class of art gives way to another, in which the same thought is renewed in a fresh shape, so that, though the dead form decays, the spirit lives and passes on, let us hope, into a superior. That which I desire now to emphasize is, that the average art of America is of no more worth than the average literature of its journals. Both are cheap and rapid productions to meet the immediate wants of a people, whose standard of culture is steadily advancing.”—*Farver's "Art Thoughts."*

A GREAT “ALIGORICAL” WORK.

Who was that poet who wrote, a few months ago, a rhymed “Order of a Picture,” which jingled so pleasantly, and brought up such pretty images to our ken? It doesn't matter whether it was Alice Cary, or Horace Greeley, or what other gentle melodist; the “Order” was a very clever affair—much more judicious than that which Mr. A. T. Stewart, the New York millionaire, sent over to Paris a year or two ago, and which has enabled Mr. Yvon, a hitherto very reputable artist of the French metropolis, to paint himself down an ass, all over 1,200 square feet of canvas.

You have read the story in the papers? The order was for an allegorical picture, which should, 1st, be forty feet by thirty in area, and 2d, convey, through figures and other allegorical representations, an idea of the greatness of the American nation. The result is, Stewart is \$30,000 out of pocket, his friends are embarrassed at the necessity of praising his picture when he shall get it hung on his walls, and poor Yvon, the artist, is hooted wherever he goes.

And that is not the worst of the consequences. Behold the force of example and emulation! Here is Jubal Lee, of Chicago, grain speculator, real estate owner and general capitalist, in fact, millionaire and solid man of Chicago, who, hearing of Mr. Stewart's canvas, has determined not to be outdone, and has, therefore, in a letter to Minister Washburne, ordered something which shall “beat Stewart's, if it's in the cards to do it.” The sole object of this communication, Mr. Editor of the REVIEW, is to furnish you with the manuscript of Mr. Lee's letter. How I came by it is no matter. That's a diplomatic secret, which will come out in due

ORDER.

CHICAGO, May 1, 1870.

Hon. E. B. Washburne,

U. S. Minister ect. Parris;

Dear Sir:—Having learned some facts relative of the aligorical picture recently painted by a Parris artist, for Mr. Stewart, of which is said to be a great affair, and having resolv'd to beat Stewart, as I have yealed to No 1 in Chicago, in my devotion to Art as a patron of the same to the extent of my limited Means.

Mr. Washburne I want an Aligoric Pict. 42 ft. x 36 or thereabouts leastways larger by a clean yard ea. way than Stewarts and wch is to be tippecal of the hist. & characture of our Great Western Metropolis. You know what Chi. is and what she is bound to Be the four most City of the Globe all right you go ahead and give the Order to such Artist as you may select subject to the Hints below.

I dont want Stewarts artist. I want somebody who can beat him handsome Just whitewash him every time. I like Mr. Chrome very well his works are very popular in Chi. If he is in Parris please Engage him at any price under \$50,000.

My Ideas as to the Pict. air these